

CEPPS/IFES Quarterly Report: July 1, 2013–September 30, 2013

**NEPAL: STRENGTHEN POLITICAL PARTIES, ELECTORAL AND LEGISLATIVE
PROCESSES**

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**International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)
Quarterly Report**

I. SUMMARY

During the quarter, IFES programmatic activities concentrated on direct support to preparations for the planned November 19 Constituent Assembly elections, including training and capacity building, legal advice, voter education and ballot production. The probability that elections will be held as scheduled is increasingly likely (though still with some uncertainty), and the Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) is moving forward with its election calendar, including the candidate nomination process, preparations for ballot production, and producing and distributing voter education materials.

IFES's most critical support to ECN in this quarter has been preparing and conducting a series of election preparation trainings that focused on elections and security; voter education; elections and media; electoral logistics and financial management; election operations management, electoral observation; and polling and counting at the central, regional, and district levels. In conjunction with trainings, IFES also supported development of ECN's election training plans, agendas, contents and manuals. Further, IFES' in-house team at the ECN (Training Advisor, Training Assistant, Public Information Specialist, and Ballot Printing Consultants) continues to work with their ECN counterparts on a daily basis building institutional capacity focused specifically on the 19 November election.

With IFES' continued support, the ECN has increased capacity to develop and produce voter education materials for the upcoming election, such as posters, leaflets, FAQs, handbooks, stickers, banners, flipcharts, and a training video on the polling process. It has also demonstrated increased capacity to deliver community level voter education programs, such as a mock polling event/exercises, and to develop major sections of reader-friendly website content.

In addition to the above activities, IFES analyzed key issues for the legal framework governing the upcoming election. IFES' analysis resulted in small amendments to the Election Code of Conduct to better account for the needs of women observers and persons with disabilities. IFES also helped the ECN to identify limitations in some of their legal documents, including election-related directives, procedures, guidelines, policies, acts and regulations. Support was also given to foster improved stakeholder understanding of opportunities to enhance persons with disabilities' representation in a new Constituent Assembly (CA).

IFES continued to provide technical support to ECN on ballot production, which will lay the groundwork for planned ballot printing in the next quarter. All repairs, provision of spare parts and

staff training for one Heidelberg and three Webtech printing presses and two Countwise ballot count machines were completed during the quarter. Support also included production and resource planning, developing staff capacity, and assuring sufficient printing press capacity to meet ballot production deadlines.

With a heightened focus on outreach to marginalized communities, specifically to people with disabilities, IFES' Disability project developed and conducted a baseline survey and prepared a draft report. The sub-grantee on the disability project, National Federation of the Disabled Nepal (NFDN), received accreditation from ECN for observing the election and, for the first time in Nepal, will be conducting disability election access monitoring. This will occur in partnership with IFES in 125 polling locations. All five of IFES' CSO subawardees provided on-site support at mobile voter registration camps facilitating registration of 111,195 voters, including 1,027 persons with disability. A total of 151 CSO voter education project staff also received training on registration and election day poll activities. Throughout this quarter, the CSOs continued to maintain excellent coordination with ECN/District Election Office (DEO) staff. The five CSOs also completed a second survey to identify gaps in election knowledge in their communities, and data analysis has been shared with stakeholders.

In addition to direct ECN support, IFES provided quality analysis, comments and translated materials to external stakeholders. Regular reports on program activities, analysis of the political and electoral environment, and electoral legal document translations were provided to U.S. Embassy officials, USAID, the Election Working Group (EWG) of donors, NPTF donors, and other relevant stakeholders, including the Nepali Election Observation Committee (NEOC), among other partners.

II. BACKGROUND

Political Updates

At the end of the fourth quarter, the chances of elections being held on November 19, 2013 were at best 80 percent, following public perception. The ECN is following its election calendar with slight delays. By early September, the major political parties accelerated their election preparation pace. And finally, in mid-September President Yadav endorsed the ordinance forwarded by the Government to increase the number of CA seats to 601, amending the previous 25-point ordinance that had fixed the CA size at 491; this endorsement went through after receiving tremendous pressure from various political quarters including the Janajatis, Madhesis, and women's groups. The ECN has since moved ahead with implementation of remaining electoral activities including producing and disseminating voter education materials, proceeding with the candidate nomination process, and preparing for ballot production.

The government forwarded the report of the Constituency Delimitation Commission (CDC) to ECN on August 8, but it failed to establish an implementation timeline. The 135-page CDC report retained all of the existing 240 constituencies—116 in the Madhes and 124 in the hill and mountain zones. The report proposed the same population threshold of 112,000 for a constituency for all the three ecological zones. However, it proposed seat adjustment as per the 2011 Census population in at least 40 districts, including Kathmandu, Lalitpur, and Bhaktapur. A member of the CDC was cited as saying that the constitutional and legal complexities made making any changes on the report too difficult. The Madhes parties were not satisfied with the outcome.

As political parties prepare for the November 19 CA elections, the anti-election parties - an alliance of 33 smaller parties led by Mohan Baidya of the CPN-Maoists who have been protesting since the

announcement of the election date, have announced fresh anti-election protests to begin November 11 (post Dashain/Tihar festival season) through election day, including targeting election candidates. They have stated they will not participate in the upcoming election unless their two major demands are met. These are a round-table conference of all political parties and resignation of Khil Raj Regmi (Chairman of Interim Election Council of Ministers) from post of Chief Justice.

Major political parties including the Unified CPN (Maoist), Nepali Congress (NC), Unified Marxist Leninist (UML) and Rastriya Prajatantra Party-Nepal (RPP-N) announced their plans to deploy their youth wing cadres at polling stations on polling day to support their party platforms and candidates.

On July 14th, the interim election government announced a full budget of Rs. 517.24 billion for fiscal year 2013/14. The budget allocated Rs. 16 billion for the CA election. The ECN is to receive NPR 7.4 billion from the Nepal Peace Trust Fund (NPTF). They have to date received NPR 1.1 billion of which they have spent around 0.3 billion and they expect to request the next tranche of around 60% of total budget by the end of October.

ECN progress on election preparations includes as follows:

- Announced initial voter registration cut-off date at July 15 for the November 19 election date;
- Acted in accordance with Supreme Court's July 23 decision (reversing its July 15 decision) to lift its interim order asking the government and the ECN not to update the voter roll without citizenship certificates;
- Closed voter registration and began data verification, cleaning and updating the voter roll process, only to reopen for one week in mid-August under strong pressure mainly from the Madhesi parties;
- Invited observers to apply for election observation accreditation, providing a one-month application timeline, and accredited 52 national organizations and 2 international organizations to observe;
- Set up the Joint Election Operation Centre at the ECN, operational since the end of September to handle election-related issues, with a specific role in managing election security;
- Coordinated with the Ministry of Home Affairs to prepare an Integrated Security Plan to mobilize approximately 184,000 security personnel, in varying numbers from the different security agencies– Nepal Police, Nepal Army, Armed Police Force and Temporary Police - for election security purposes. President Yadav approved a bill forwarded by the government to amend the constitution that would make way for Nepal Army deployment for the same purpose;
- Preparing to print and distribute individual Voter ID cards/invitations to vote, although it is very late in the process to be initiating this task now. So far, the dissemination is planned in different stages: requesting voters to collect at DEO offices; dissemination through door-to-door visits made by social mobilizers hired by ECN; and at polling stations a couple of days before Election Day. If Voter ID cards cannot be printed, ECN's back-up plan is to ask the voter to bring along a picture ID, preferable their citizenship card, to their polling station to match it against the voter roll with photograph details;
- Provided parties the opportunity to register at the ECN and allocated designated party symbols to 139 registered parties in July;
- Invited parties to apply to participate in the CA election (130 parties applied, 122 appear on the final ballot) and to nominate candidates and submit candidate lists for the PR and FPTP system by Oct 3 (giving them an extra week for filing nomination, based on pressure from all the parties);

- EC is currently designing PR ballots to commence ballot printing for the PR system on October 5, and subsequently to begin printing of FPTP ballots from October 13. It plans to finish ballot production for both systems by October 31 and distribute all printed and packaged ballots to the 240 constituencies by November 10, as planned in the ECN election timeline.

Program Objectives

Under the Consortium of Elections and Political Strengthening (CEPPS III), IFES activities will support one of the three principal objectives as detailed by USAID: Strengthen institutions involved in electoral processes, either as actors or participants and the following sub-objectives:

- Strengthen democratic legal framework
- Strengthen the ECN's electoral management capacity and
- Expand and improve delivery of voter education

In support of the above, IFES will achieve the following objectives:

- To ensure that Nepal develops a body of legislation on the electoral process that is comprehensive, coherent and consistent; which conforms to international standards and suits the socio-economic context and new political realities of Nepal;
- To improve the capacity of the ECN to manage future elections and consolidate its mandate and performance through the provision of high level technical assistance in the legal, management and technical aspects of elections and long-term professional development capacity building;
- To expand and improve the delivery of voter education by working with the ECN and selected non-governmental organizations to plan, develop, and implement effective voter education programs, with a focus on capacity building, in order to enhance the electorate's understanding of democratic practices and rights, and increase participation in the electoral process;
 - To closely monitor, analyze and report on the overall electoral process with a focus on the Election Commission's internal activities and external interaction with other electoral stakeholders;
 - To provide a facility that can address unforeseen windows of opportunity that may arise in Nepal's unpredictable post-conflict political and electoral environment, in order to achieve immediate beneficial results in line with the program objectives.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

1. Strengthening Democratic Legal Framework

Summary: During this quarter, IFES continued to provide further analyses and comments on a number of key issues for the legal framework for the CA election, including on ECN's directives, codes of conduct, and election procedures, observation, voter education, trainings, and communication. Many of the areas that IFES identified as problematic were discussed by national and international observer groups and political parties.

Activity 1.1 – Technical Assistance

IFES provided analyses and comments on a number of key issues for the legal framework for the upcoming CA election which include ECN's deliberations on:

- Vote counting for the CA election directive – which lacks clear procedures for vote count reconciliations;
- Training management and performance mechanisms directive;
- CA election directive, covering constituency candidate nomination and the voting process;
- Communication medium monitoring directive – which places the locus of media monitoring back within the ECN, rather than contracting it to media monitoring professionals;
- Financial directive to returning officers;
- Code of conduct for the CA election – containing watered down requirements for campaign finance reporting and transparency;
- Observation directive for the election for members of the CA 2013 – which is more restrictive than would be usual practice for election observation;
- International observers accreditation procedures and code of conduct, CA election 2013;
- Code of conduct for national observers, 2013; and
- Voter education directives.

IFES also reviewed and commented on the following Acts, Regulations and Policies:

- CA election regulation – which are almost exactly the same as the regulation issued by ECN for the 2008 CA election; the language throughout is dense to the point of impenetrability, repetitive and lacks clarity;
- Gender and inclusion policy – which is a worthy statement of ideals but lacks broad implementation capability or legal foundation;
- The Election Commission Act 2007, which integrates the provisions of the April 2013 amendment ordinance;
- The 2013 Election Observation Policy and 2013 Voter Education Policy;
- 2013 Training Policy; and
- 2013 Communication Policy.

Complimentary to USAID funding, IFES had received funding from the Norwegian Government for electoral law reform programming through June 30 2013. After June, the Norwegian Government decided to fund the ELR program using Norway's ESP funds rather than to fund through IFES, in an effort to consolidate all programs funded by the Norwegian Government under a reduced number of working organizations/portfolios. Activities conducted under the Norwegian grant will be able to continue post-elections through current USAID support.

No further work on the new draft electoral laws was done in this reporting period given ECN's focus on reviewing existing election laws and regulations and making changes in an effort to secure political agreements ahead of the November CA election.

At the beginning of the quarter, IFES discussed with the ECN and NDI supporting an election observation group and larger observation network amendments to the proposed framework for election observation. As a result, ECN lowered the education qualifications for female observers and altogether removed the education criteria for female observers observed in the 2008 CA election. The ECN also amended the code of conduct to allow persons with disability to use transportation on Election Day.

Activity 1.2 – Capacity Building

Summary: Informal meetings were held this quarter with electoral stakeholders, including observation groups, CSOs working with persons with disabilities, Election Commissioners and ECN staff. Issues discussed related largely to maintaining international standards for election observation and ensuring that the upcoming election is accessible for persons with disability. IFES supported a national- level advocacy workshop for 73 attendees from Disabled Peoples’ Organizations, political parties and political leaders with disabilities to adopt strategies for making their party manifestoes disability inclusive.

2. Strengthening Electoral Management Capacity of the ECN

Summary: In this quarter, IFES continued to provide technical support to ECN on ballot production for the CA election, including developing production and resource plans, procuring an additional printing press and materials, and assuring sufficient printing press capacity to provide ballots on time. IFES continued to support ECN’s voter registration activities – including providing updated data to assist ECN to understand registration gaps and to plan mobile registration camp activities.

During this period, IFES worked very closely with the ECN to prepare ballot production plans, including:

- Completing refurbishment of the remaining Heidelberg ballot printing press;
- Holding consultations with vendors for repairs and testing of refurbished machines;
- Procuring of new web offset press, a Webtech Xplore, and spares for all refurbished presses;
- Arranging a pre-delivery inspection visit to the Webtech factory in India for ECN staff and a JEMC (Government printing house) representative;
- Provision of Webtech press technicians and operators to ensure support during the production process;
- Contracting of a ballot designer and an international ballot production expert to oversee the process;
- Hiring of four ballot production monitoring assistants for monitoring the entire production process;
- Coordinating with JEMC for repairs to their Komori presses and post-production facilities;
- Facilitating and coordinating with UNDP/ESP for drafting specifications and procurement/installation of numbering systems and spares, and a cutting machine;
- Working with JEMC and ECN to draft, revise and implement ballot production plans; Installing and testing the new Webtech Xplore press at JEMC;
- Supervising and facilitating the timely production of mock ballots crucial for educational polling process videos and training purposes;
- Regular coordination with ECN and JEMC around timely purchase of supplies for ballot printing;
- Planning and facilitating a 1.5 day orientation session for ECN and IFES’ ballot monitors, and JEMC supervisors and staff.

In mid-September, soon after his arrival, IFES’ international ballot consultant prepared a risk assessment report on ballot printing status at JEMC and shared report findings with UNDP-ESP and ECN. The report identified a number of possible risks to the ballot printing process. The report also shared mitigation measures and listed recommendations in priority order.

IFES continued to undertake, for ECN and other stakeholders, intensive analysis of voter registration data released at the end of each Nepali month, including from mobile camps, and comparing it to the 2011 Nepal Census and IFES CSO sub-awardees' data from their surveys of marginalized communities. As of end September, the total eligible voting population is 12,147,834 (6,166,821 females, 5,980,858 males, 155 Third Gender) out of the total 12,477,012 million registered on the voter list. Approximately 330,000 of the registered voters are under 18, so will not be eligible to vote until they turn 18.

Registration in 2013 has been fairly evenly split between normal continuous voter registration such as at DEOs and District Administration Offices (DAOs) (724,809) and the mobile operations during the March - July period (691,292). There was a last minute rush at DEO/DAOs: 252,108 individuals registered from June 15-July 15, with around one fifth of these from Kathmandu DEO/DAO. 168,698 people registered during the one week reopening of registration from August 17-23. Mobile operations were wound down during this period. This data suggests it may have been useful to continue these at higher intensity in the last month to make voter registration more accessible for the many people that delay their registration until the deadline.

The joint citizenship certificate issue/voter registration camps were responsible for registering 67% of the total mobile registrations in 2013, and 33% of all registrations. Interestingly, despite higher population in the Terai, fewer voters were registered at the citizenship certificate/voter registration camps in the Terai (202,879) than in the Hills (218,410). This could also suggest fewer citizenship certificates issued through these camps in the Terai than in the Hills, though there is no data to validate this supposition.

Activity 2.2 – Capacity Building

a) Implementing a Program of Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) Training

Summary: IFES spent a considerable amount of time supporting the voter registration mobile camps and the additional voter registration campaign in mid-August. IFES also provided varying levels of support for the different cascades of trainings in preparation for election, including logistical, administrative, and technical assistance support. Trainings included: elections and security; voter education; elections and media; electoral logistics and financial management; election operation and management; election observation; and polling and counting, at the different cascade levels - central, regional and district.

No BRIDGE activities were held during this quarter, primarily due to ECN conducting election preparation activities such as voter registration mobile camps, finalizing the voter list and conducting eight different cascaded trainings on elections. BRIDGE annual plans for 2013 were substantially revised due to the higher priority of CA election preparation activities. Post-election BRIDGE activities are expected to resume early in 2014.



Regional Training

b) Organizational Capacity Building

Summary: In coordination with UNDP-ESP, IFES played a central role in finalizing the ECN's election training plans. IFES' guidance and support has been influential in all election related training programs, agendas and content, training manuals and the ECN website, developing the capacities of the ECN's training and voter education teams and website content development committee. IFES support for ballot production is developing the capacity of responsible ECN officers to manage ballot paper production. IFES' in-house team at the ECN - the Training Advisor and Training assistant, Public Information Specialist, National and International Ballot Printing Consultant - continued to ensure effective capacity building of their ECN counterparts on a daily basis, now focused specifically on the November 19 election.

During this quarter the training advisor, public information specialist and two training assistants provided varying levels of logistical, technical, and administrative support for 25 trainings reaching 933 people. See Annex one for table of all trainings completed.

IFES assisted in increasing the ECN's capacity to develop training manuals, agendas, and training content for the following trainings: elections and media, elections and security, voter education, elections operation and management, polling and counting, Electoral Logistics and Finance Management and election observation.

IFES continued to work with the ECN to increase their capacity to maintain and upload website content. In addition, IFES facilitated a number of meetings with senior and junior level ECN staff, making presentations and organizing content writing workshops. This resulted in ECN-developed content with IFES' guidance on content structure, layout, and use of simple language in English and Nepali.

In this quarter, IFES' Ballot Print Consultant also continued work with the ECN's Printing Officer and secretariat in the refurbishment of existing ballot printing presses, procurement of the new Webtech Xplore printing press, procurement of ballot print paper (funded by UNDP ESP), additional required machinery, including cutting machine and numbering heads, and the production planning for ballot printing for the upcoming election in order to develop ECN staffs' ballot production management skills for the upcoming election.

3. Expanding and Improving the Delivery of Voter Education

Activity 3.1 Capacity Building Support to the ECN on the Design, Implementation and Evaluation of Voter Education Campaign

Summary: IFES continues to provide ongoing daily capacity building support to the ECN and Electoral Education and Information Centre (EEIC) voter education efforts, including playing a major role supporting the development of ECN's voter education and outreach policies, guidelines, plans, products and events in preparation for the upcoming election. IFES worked with the ECN to develop and produce training manuals to be used for conducting different levels of voter education trainings including materials to train media personnel at the central, regional, district levels on elections and media. IFES supported ECN in conducting a mock polling event and developing extensive website content.

In preparation for the upcoming election, IFES' public information specialist has been heavily involved in supporting the development of various ECN voter education products and tools including

posters, leaflets, FAQs, handbooks, stickers, banners, flipcharts, and a training video on polling processes.

IFES supported ECN in finalizing and producing the voter education training manual for training 187 central and regional level voter educators/trainers, who will in turn train district level trainers to reach 15,000 voter education volunteers (NISIKA). Similarly, IFES supported the ECN in finalizing and producing the election and media training manual for training 227 central and regional level media persons on elections and media. They are expected to train approximately 2,580 district level media persons at 86 events nationwide.

IFES also supported ECN in organizing and filming a mock polling event at a Village Development Committee (VDC) in Bhaktapur with approximately 200 local representatives/residents. The video is a tool to be used in training approximately 142,000 polling officers and staff.

ECN's new website now has 95 percent of content developed by ECN officials and uploaded and translated with the help of an IFES consultant based at the ECN to provide daily support to the redesigned site. With IFES' support content on the site will be available shortly in both Nepali and English languages.

Activity 3.2 Material and Broadcasting Support for Voter Education Campaigns



Media Training Event in Bajhang

Summary: During this period, IFES supported preparation for the design and production of a number of major voter education materials and events. At ECN's request, IFES is designing a leaflet on the voting process targeting voters and will be publishing two million copies for ECN to disseminate through its 15,000 voter educators at the community level (NISIKA). IFES also printed 5,000 copies of the five different informational voter education posters used during the cascade of voter education trainings conducted by the ECN. IFES has completed designing voter education stickers for ECN and will be producing 75,000 copies to be

disseminated through the DEOs and NISIKAs in the upcoming quarter. Similarly, IFES completed designing flex banners to be displayed at the polling stations, on polling day; 10,500 copies of which will be produced in the next quarter. IFES also produced a 10-minute video on polling process based on ECN's request, used for training polling and counting officials. The video was used at the MTOT on polling and counting to train master trainers, at end September. The video was filmed at a mock polling session organized by ECN in Bhaktapur District, with IFES' support.

Based on the needs of IFES' six CSO sub-grantees, IFES helped design five different informational and motivational voter education leaflets for five different target audiences – persons with disability, women, Dalits, Freed Kamaiyas and youth – and will be printing close to a million copies of these in the upcoming quarter to be distributed by the CSOs. Similarly, five different posters focusing on different themes including the voting process, CA composition, ballots marking and motivation to vote have been designed. Approximately 135,000 copies of these posters will be printed and distributed by the CSOs. Four hundred copies of the voter education flipchart designed in the last quarter for the disability project was printed and distributed via NFDN and its district level partners in this quarter. Another 13-page voter education flip chart was designed in this quarter for the CSOs;

1300 copies of which will be printed early in the next quarter and used in educating voters from marginalized communities. A 1-minute radio PSA/jingle targeting youth and using a popular Nepali artist was produced and broadcast on two national FM stations over 400 spots. A table summarizing the list of voter education products and quantities can be found in Annex two.

During this quarter, IFES also developed a how-to-poll video for the CSO voter educators, who will be using this video to conduct mock polling events in the pre-election period.

Activity 3.3 Sub-grantees to selected NGOs to Develop and Deliver Voter Education Efforts

Summary: All six of IFES' CSO sub-grantees completed their scheduled activities to end September in motivating, educating and providing support on voter registration activities to their target groups - youth, women, Dalits, freed Kamaiyas, and people with disability in July and August. They commenced election preparation activities focusing on the upcoming CA election from early September. The major focus of the program in this quarter was coordinating with District Election Offices (DEO) to provide help-desk support to marginalized populations at ECN and Home Ministry coordinated mobile voter registration camps held at VDC, DEO and DAOs and to develop targeted voter education plans for the upcoming election. Excellent coordination and communication was maintained between the CSOs and their respective DEOs and other government counterparts.



Community Based Voter Education Outreach

During this quarter, IFES's five initial CSO sub grantees – Dalit National Federation (DNF), Janaki Women's Awareness Society (JWAS), Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization (NNDSWO), Nepal National Social Welfare Association (NNSWA), and Youth Initiative (YI) operated under a no-cost extension agreement in July and August and under a cost extension agreement in September 2013. The CSOs maintained the same 25 working districts as in the last quarter for the voter registration activities and

added five new districts for election support activities- adding Kaski (YI), Salyan and Jajarkot (DNF), Rolpa and Dailekh (NNSWA) - working through their member organizations and branch offices and targeting Dalits, women, freed Kamaiyas and youth in selected VDCs. VDCs were selected in coordination with the DEOs at voter registration camp sites. A summary of beneficiaries for this quarter is shown below:

CSO/Activity	Number of Districts	Number of VDCs/ Municipalities	Total Beneficiaries
DNF	4		11,945
Help Desk Support in Joint Mobile Camp			11,445
Mass reached through Mini Survey on Electoral Issues			500
JWAS	5		7,922

Help Desk Support in Joint Mobile Camp			7,422
Mass reached through Mini Survey on Electoral Issues			500
NNSWA	4		14,483
Help Desk Support in Joint Mobile Camp			13983
Mass reached through Mini Survey on Electoral Issues			500
NNDSWO	8		6,653
Help Desk Support in Joint Mobile Camp			5,953
Mass reached through Mini Survey on Electoral Issues			700
YI	4		72,465
Help Desk Support in Joint Mobile Camp			71,365
Mass reached through Mini Survey on Electoral Issues			1,100
Total	25		113,468

To support ECN's initiatives, all five CSOs coordinated with their respective DEOs and self-help groups and mobilized a total of 885 volunteers at mobile voter registration camps to provide help-desk support for marginalized populations. The CSOs supported DEOs in publicizing the mobile camp events in advance through community level awareness raising events, miking, orientation in schools and broadcasting voter education PSAs on national radio networks in a total of 25 districts. The NFDN also helped register 1,027 persons with disability by mobilizing 91 project staff/CAF and DAF members in six districts.

In this quarter, five CSOs supported 121 help desks at mobile registration camps to register 110,168 eligible voters. To coordinate camp activities, the CSOs held 148 formal and informal meetings with their relevant DEOs. The CSOs also continued mobilizing the local media for promotion of the voter registration work, a total of 148 media coverage instances were registered in this quarter. Further, YI broadcasted a youth friendly educational one-minute radio jingle through one national FM stations over 15 days for a total of 75 spots.



VDC Level CSO Help Desk

US Ambassador to Nepal, Mr. Peter W. Bodde, visited Kailali, Morang and Rupandehi districts as part of his "Election Road Trip". In each district, he met with the DEO team and CSOs— NNSWA, DNF and NNDSWO - and discussed the cooperation between IFES and the District Election Officer and enquired about election preparation activities. He expressed his appreciation for the work done by the CSOs in empowering marginalized communities to engage and participate in the upcoming election.

Senior IFES Nepal staff made field trips during this quarter to monitor and support CSOs activities, especially at the mobile voter registration camp sites, in the Mid-West, Far-West, West and Central Regions.

On September 10-12, IFES organized three-day training for the six CSOs', including project managers and board members. The training focused on voter education for the upcoming CA election and project planning and management for the September 2013 through January 2014 period. Following this training the six CSOs, including NFDN, organized similar trainings for their respective voter education project teams. A total of 132 project staff including community facilitators, managers and coordinators attended these training.

IFES-supported CSOs conducted mini-surveys researching the knowledge, attitude and practices of targeted marginalized citizens in the context of the upcoming election. Four training sessions were conducted for CSOs in their own working districts for Project Managers, Survey Supervisors and Enumerators on sampling and interviewing skills. In addition, Project Managers were separately trained on compiling and organizing data in SPSS software. A total of 60 (42 male and 18 female) enumerators were trained. A total of 3,300 respondents from 7 different groups such as students of Kathmandu valley and out of Kathmandu valley (YI), women/Muslim women (JWAS), Haliya and Badi (NNSDWO), freed Kamaiya groups (NNSWA) and Dalit (DNF) were interviewed within the survey. Data collection is completed and headline data of the survey has been shared with the relevant stakeholders.

In this quarter, IFES's sub-awardee on the disability project, NFDN, conducted a project baseline survey with 1,200 respondents in six districts and prepared a draft report, which will be shared with stakeholders once finalized (in the next quarter). NFDN lobbied and advocated with ECN and political parties at the national level for increased participation of persons with disabilities in the upcoming CA Election. Working with their partner Disabled People's Organizations (DPO), NFDN formed 49 Community Advocacy Forums (CAF) across 6 districts, 1 per working VDC, and 6 District Advocacy Forums (DAF), 1 per working district, with a total of 1,294 members, who received training on leadership and advocacy issues. Similarly, 593 members of 32 other community groups such as women's groups, forest user groups, youth clubs, etc. were oriented on the need for inclusion of persons with disabilities in community based initiatives and on civic and political rights of persons with disabilities. A national level advocacy workshop was conducted with 73 attendees from DPOs, political parties and political leaders with disabilities to discuss and adopt strategies for making their party manifesto inclusive from a disability perspective. Nineteen project staff members of NFDN were trained on election systems, electoral policies, and disability provision in electoral laws and voter education in preparation for implementation of election focused activities. In six districts NFDN met regularly with District Election Officers to ensure solidarity and support in their election project initiatives. Twenty two meetings were held in total. NFDN also finalized designs of disability-friendly voter education materials such as posters and leaflets, including in Braille, to be distributed to project beneficiaries. In the next quarter, NFDN will be conducting the Disability Election Access Monitoring program (DEAM) for which IFES has hired a coordinator and assistant to support implementation.

4. Monitor, Analyze and Report on the Overall Electoral Process

Activity 4.1 – On-going Analysis and Reporting on the Evolving Electoral Environment

Summary: IFES continued monitoring, analyzing and reporting to stakeholders on the progress of electoral related developments, changes to the electoral legal framework and ECN activities. Regular reports on program activities and analysis of the political and electoral environment were provided to U.S. Embassy officials, USAID, the Election Working Group (EWG) of donors, NPTF donors, and other relevant stakeholders.

This quarter, a number of reports were provided on issues such as: election observers' application forms and processes, ECN committees to manage election preparations; election operations issues such as the election timetable, operations calendar; and constituency delimitation. Comments were also issued on amendments to the legal framework, such as the removal of constitutional difficulties ordinance, the amended voter registration regulation, the CA election Ordinance, codes of conduct and directives for voter registration and electoral observation. IFES translated legal documents, ECN policies and ECN information materials issued during the quarter for distribution to stakeholders.

A briefing note for Nepal's Heads of Mission was prepared at the request of the US Ambassador, detailing IFES's program activity in the run-up to the November 19 elections. This was to be presented at an October 2 meeting at the Embassy attended by more than a dozen HoMs or their representatives.

Activity 4.2 – Provision of News Clipping Service

Summary: IFES Nepal continued to deliver its daily news clipping service on the evolving political and electoral situation in Nepal throughout the reporting period. News reports are taken from the major news outlets in Nepal, such as the *Republica*, *Kathmandu Post* and the *Himalayan Times* as well as other reputable online sources of news and analysis on Nepali politics.

Results: Domestic and international electoral stakeholders well-informed on developments in the political and electoral environment in Nepal.

5. Provision for unforeseen windows of opportunity

The \$130,000 Windows of Opportunity funds were spent on repairs, provision of spare parts and staff training for one Heidelberg and three Webtech printing presses and two Countwise ballot count machines in quarters 3 and 4 of 2013, in preparation for ballot printing at JEMC. Repairs to the Webtech, Heidelberg and Countwise machines are now all complete.

Results: Refurbishment of one Heidelberg and three Webtech printing presses and two Countwise ballot count machines completed and machines tested. Completed procurement of all required spare parts purchased for these machines. JEMC staff trained in maintaining these machines.

6. General Management

On July 17th, five months after IFES's regular follow-up, the Social Welfare Council invited IFES to sign a one year project agreement document. Before the end of the first six months of signing the agreement, mid-January 2014, IFES is expected to convene a committee meeting to discuss updates on activities with relevant stakeholders from ECN, SWC, Ministry of Women and Children and Social Welfare, and Nepal Planning Commission.

Also in early September, IFES chief of party (CoP) Alan Wall left his position. In the interim, a Senior Election Advisor along with the Deputy Chief of Party are ensuring efficient management of day to day operations and comprehensive technical guidance to the ECN and partners. Recruitment of a new CoP will continue into the next quarter.

IV. RESULTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During the reporting period the IFES Nepal program has achieved the following major results:

1. Strengthening Democratic Legal Framework

Technical Assistance

- Election Code of Conduct further amended to take better account of the needs of women observers and persons with disabilities;
- ECN aware of limitations in some of their legal documents – acts, regulations directives, procedures, policies and guidelines, for the forthcoming election.

Organizational Capacity Building

- Enhanced stakeholder knowledge of international election observation standards, and accessible elections for persons with disability;
- Better stakeholder understanding of means of enhancing the representation of persons with disabilities in a new CA;
- Increased ECN awareness of amendments that can be made to improve the ECN's regulations and guidelines for a CA election.

2. Strengthening Electoral Management Capacity of the ECN

Technical Assistance

- Heidelberg printing machine is refurbished, tested and ready to print ballots;
- Procurement, installation and testing of new Webtech Xplore printing machine is completed, together with procurement of spares for JEMC's other machinery and post production equipment such as numbering and cutting machines;
- Ballot paper quantity needs, ballot printing options and associated production schedules and floor plans developed and finalized with IFES' guidance and advice;
- ECN's capacities to manage ballot paper printing enhanced;
- Timely production of all mock ballots for filming of the educational polling process video with IFES assistance and supervision;
- Hiring of additional ballot production and monitoring staff to provide necessary assistance for design, production and monitoring;
- Plans for conducting a 1.5 day orientation session for ECN and IFES's ballot monitors, and JEMC supervisors and staff finalized;
- ECN provided with reliable data and analysis on which to target voter registration campaigns.

Organizational Capacity Building

- Series of election preparation trainings for ECN on: elections and security; voter education; elections and media; electoral logistics and financial management; election operation and

management; election observation; and polling and counting, at the different cascade levels - central, regional and district.

- Development of ECN's election training plans, training agendas, contents and manuals;
- Increased ECN's training team's capacity to conduct different cascades of trainings in preparation for election, including the following trainings: elections and security; voter education; elections and media; electoral logistics and financial management; election operation and management; election observation; and polling and counting;
- Major content, in Nepali and English, developed for ECN's new website by ECN staff under IFES' guidance;
- Enhancement of ECN secretariat's knowledge and skills in ballot production and planning.

3. Expanding and Improving the Delivery of Voter Education

Capacity Building Support to the ECN on the Design, Implementation and Evaluation of Voter Education Campaign

Increased capacity of ECN to plan and produce various voter education materials for the upcoming election – posters, leaflets, FAQs, handbooks, stickers, banners, flipcharts, and a training video on polling process;

- Assisted in developing and producing voter education training manuals for cascaded training for voter educators and volunteers, and for the elections and media cascaded training for media persons;
- Increased ECN capacity to deliver local community level voter education programs such as a mock polling exercise;
- Major sections of reader-friendly website content developed by ECN staff with IFES support.

Material and Broadcasting Support for Voter Education Campaigns

- Designed - one ECN leaflet and five different leaflets for CSOs; leaflet in Braille format for CSOs; five different posters for CSOs; flex banners for ECN for polling locations; education 13-page flipchart for CSOs; and stickers for ECN;
- Produced - 5,000 posters for ECN; 400 flipcharts for CSO; one polling video for training ECN polling staff; and one radio PSA for CSO and broadcast on 400 spots on two national radio stations; Supported ECN to organize a mock polling event.
- IFES supported preparations for conducting 1200 street drama performances and musical concerts in 16 locations, in the upcoming quarter, and filming a polling video for CSOs for educating voters.



Community Voter Education Event

Sub grants to selected NGOs to develop and Deliver Voter Education Efforts

- Disability project baseline survey conducted and draft report prepared.
- 121 CSO help desks at mobile voter registration camps supported 111,195 voters to register on the voter register, including 1,027 persons with disability.

- Marginalized communities motivated to register to vote through community meetings and visits, miking and dissemination of print materials and radio PSAs.
- Excellent coordination achieved with ECN through 170 formal and informal meetings with relevant DEOs.
- A total of 151 voter education project staff received orientation on the CA election-focused project activities.
- Different voter education materials and tools designed and in production.
- Second set of CSO conducted survey completed; data analysis and headline data shared with stakeholders.
- NFDN received accreditation from ECN for observing the election and will be conducting Disability Election Access Monitoring (first time in Nepal) in the upcoming CA election in partnership with IFES in 125 polling locations.

4. Monitor, Analyze and Report on the Overall Electoral Process

On-going Analysis and Reporting on the Evolving Electoral Environment

- U.S. Embassy, USAID staff, EWG and other relevant stakeholders informed on ECN election preparations and related political issues through regular reports, analysis and briefings.

Provision of News Clipping Service

- Domestic and international electoral stakeholders well-informed on developments in the political and electoral environment in Nepal.

5. Provision for unforeseen windows of opportunity

- Refurbishment of one Heidelberg and three Webtech printing presses and two Countwise ballot count machines completed and machines tested.
- Completed procurement of all required spare parts purchased for these machines.
- JEMC staff trained in maintaining these machines.

V. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

For the next quarter, IFES plans to focus on the following election preparation activities. These activities are based on the assumption there will be an election on November 19, 2013. If the election is postponed for political or security reasons, IFES's activities will be adjusted as necessary to support the ECN's revised election activity timetable and public information and education needs.

1. Strengthening Democratic Legal Framework

- Support the ECN in any further analyses and recommendations of policies, regulations and directives necessary to conduct a new CA election;
- Continue providing advice on effects of 2011 census data on relevant election activities;
- Work with stakeholders to gain acceptance and broad consensus on an electoral legal framework for the CA election;
- Continue to support development of Nepali technical advisory expertise on complex electoral system issues.

2. Strengthening Electoral Management Capacity of the ECN

- Assist ECN in further planning and implementing the remaining election training activities for the forthcoming CA election;
- Support the ECN in monitoring and oversight of the ballot production process and in providing technical support for ballot production;
- Assist ECN in the planning of revised production schedules for ballot paper production;
- Work with the ECN in finalizing ECN's training policy, guidelines and plans;
- Assist ECN to write content for the various remaining election training components;
- Support capacity development of the website content development team;
- Support BRIDGE partners to implement accepted recommendations from the BRIDGE evaluation report;
- Post-election, support BRIDGE partners to revise and implement the 2013 BRIDGE program and provide logistics, facilitation and where agreed financial support for BRIDGE workshops.

3. Expanding and Improving the Delivery of Voter Education

- Assist ECN in planning, strategizing and implementing voter and electoral education and outreach activities for the forthcoming CA election;
- Work with the ECN on support mechanisms and materials for community level electoral education programs;
- Continue to assist the ECN with completion of phase 3 of website redevelopment and uploading of content;
- Finalize and compile the five VE CSOs' second round of survey reports and disseminate findings with relevant stakeholders;
- Post-election, formation of pilot District Election Networks of election stakeholders and DEOs in selected districts.
- Continue implementation and monitoring of sub-grants to five CSOs to deliver voter/electoral education campaigns to promote participation in and knowledge of the CA election;
- Finalize the disability program baseline survey results and report;
- Post-election, implement activities through sub awardee NFDN to develop leadership and increase electoral participation through formation and capacity development of District Advocacy Forums and Community Advocacy Forums;
- Conduct disability election access monitoring and observation program in 125 locations through NFDN;
- Hire five regional field monitors to monitor and report on election activities during the pre-election, election-day and post-election periods. Compile and share the monitors' reports.

4. Monitoring, Analyzing and Reporting on the Electoral Process

- Continue to provide ongoing analysis to the U.S. Embassy, USAID and other stakeholders on the emerging electoral environment and identification of key issues.

VI. EVALUATION/CONCLUSIONS

- The “disbelief amongst large numbers of political party cadres at most levels, and voters, that the election will actually take place on that date” (19 November 2013), cited in the previous quarterly report, has been replaced in the closing weeks of this quarter by a growing conviction that the date will hold. Roadblocks including the matter of constituency delimitation, the number of seats in the new Constituent assembly, and a period of further voter registration, have all been

resolved, though not to universal satisfaction. However, the loss of time caused by the uncertainty which prevailed until late September, when attempts to bring the 33-party boycott group into the elections foundered (or were abandoned), has meant that valuable time has been lost. Parties and candidates had to scramble to ensure that the nomination deadline (delayed by one week in a last ditch attempt to bring on board the boycott group – and also to enable the contesting parties to re-focus their efforts on PR list preparation and FPTP candidate selection) was met, but this activity has now set the elections on a course which is widely seen as unalterable. Nevertheless, the threat of boycott, and the use of party youth to enforce this, leaves the route to the elections remains fraught with difficulties. As the quarter closed the applications of parties to contest the CA elections through the PR list were received by ECN, and this process seems to have been well handled, with 124 parties registered to participate.

- The threat of election boycott has been a major concern over the last six months, and in one sense the decision of the Election Government to press ahead with the polls in the absence of a significant bloc of parties has provided certainty for all the electoral players. Participating parties and independent candidates can now develop their manifestos and begin their campaigning, the ECN can proceed with its preparations for the polls, including voter education, ballot printing, pollworker training and the distribution of materials for Election Day activities and counting of ballots, and civil society can move forward with its voter education and domestic observation programs.
- However, with conditions of the boycott group unmet, new concerns arise with regard to election security and the potential for violence at the polls, and in the latter part of the campaign period. The boycott group has issued strong statements which in some cases include the threat to use force, and seem determined to disrupt the preparations of the ECN and the campaigning of parties and candidates. A ten day bandh has been called for 11 to 20 November to enforce the boycott across the country. At the same time there is a growing resistance to the bandh as a means to enforce the will of a party or group, potentially sparking confrontation between the rival youth wings of pro- and anti-poll parties, and to a reaction from voters denied access to the polls. Add to this the mobilization of the Nepal Army to support the APF (and to provide logistical support to the ECN), which many see as breaking the Peace Agreement, and the rising political heat of the campaign period could ignite clashes in more volatile areas. The boycott also means that the legitimacy of whatever emerges as the new Constituent Assembly can be called into question by those who will not be represented, and undermines the work it will do from the outset.
- During this quarter there has been continuing reliance by ECN on IFES support to ensure that the necessary elements to enable the conduct of elections on 19 November are in place. IFES has continued to work closely with the Chief Election Commissioner in particular, and with senior officials of the Commission, and has remained a key partner for difficult time-critical tasks, in particular support for the one-week reopening of voter registration in August, and the delivery of the cascade trainings for pollworkers (now on-going), the design and preparation for production and supply of voter education materials (posters, leaflets, stickers and banners), and polling place materials, as well as providing vital support for the printing of ballot papers. IFES' in-house local advisors at ECN headquarters are a "go to" point for ECN officials looking for solutions to newly identified problems and needs, and provide practical, accurate advice and support based on international best practice and the particularities of the Nepali electoral framework. IFES

support has also been vital in bringing the Commission close to the point where its website can become live.

- Concerns have been raised by domestic observers groups that the ECN has greatly increased the difficulties of domestic observers, and significantly reduced the number of observers who will be deployed, by its insistence on maintaining a regulation barring any observer from carrying out observation in a polling station in their home district. Not only does this in effect disenfranchise anyone seeking to observe the polls, it disproportionately affects women observers (less likely to spend a night or two away from their home than their male counterparts) and runs contrary to international best practice. It is understood that efforts may be made through the courts to overturn this provision.
- IFES support to the ballot printing planning and preparations have been, and will continue to be vital in enabling the ECN to move forward with this activity. The national and international consultants engaged by IFES (the same individuals who undertook this role in 2008) have worked to develop production and distribution plans and timelines for the Commission and its printing contractor, the Government-owned JEMC. Without this support it is certain that the print contractor would not have been in a position to begin to print ballots, even given the additional week which the postponement of party registration and nominations allowed.
- The mismanaged procurement process undertaken by the ECN to provide laminated Voter Cards to all registered voters means that given the timeline to the polls it is now not possible to ensure that such cards would reach all voters. Even had production proceeded, distribution at the time when district-based staff of the Commission were engaged in other important pre-election preparations would have been a distraction. ECN has, it seems, accepted that other forms of photo identification may be used by voters, principally the citizenship certificate. Similarly, the quiet dropping of the proposed use of fingerprint scanning equipment at all polling stations for voter verification purposes will make for a smoother process on polling day, and the voter register already includes a photograph of each voter sufficient for identification purposes.
- Role of IFES CSO Partners: the CSOs accomplished valuable work over this quarter in drawing in to the election process disadvantaged groups within Nepalese society and enabling them to develop a voice as both voters and citizens in the campaign and elections. Of particular note is the work with NFDN which lobbied for specific representation of persons with disabilities in the new CA. Whether or not this happens, the fact that the voice of the disable is now raised and heard by senior political figures is in itself significant. Another important development is the agreement to provide a number of polling sites across the country with disabled-friendly access facilities. Although only a small number of sites will be covered this is a good start in enabling persons with disabilities to access the polls more easily. The legal framework has also been adjusted to enables use of vehicle transport on polling day in order to facilitate access to the polls by people with disabilities.

Annex 1:

IFES MToT/ToT Trainings Quarter 4, FY 13

IFES Supported Training Events	Date	Venue	Male	Female	Total
MToT on Elections and Media	5-6 August	Dhulikhel	14	5	19
RToT on Election and Media	9-10 August	Biratnagar	30	5	35
RToT on Election and Media	9-10 August	Kathmandu	35	3	38
RToT on Election and Media	9-10 August	Pokhara	30	2	32
RToT on Election and Media	9-10 August	Nepalgunj	28	1	29
RToT on Election and Media	9-10 August	Dhangadi	26	1	27
Training to Radio FM Representative	23-24 September	Godavari	35	12	47
Total (MToT and RToT, Elections and Media)			198	29	227
MToT on Voter Education	15-16 August	Park village	24	5	29
RToT on Voter Education	25-26 August	Dhangadi	25	6	31
RToT on Voter Education	25-26 August	Nepalgunj	27	5	32
RToT on Voter Education	25-26 August	Dang	21	10	31
RToT on Voter Education	27-28 August	Pokhara	27	6	33
RToT on Voter Education	27-28 August	Birgunj	22	9	31
Total RToT (Voter Education)			122	36	158
Total Trainers (MToT and RToT, Voter Education)			146	41	187
MToT on Electoral Logistics and Finance Management	17-18 August	Park village	24	2	26
Training on Electoral Logistics and Finance Management	27-28 August	Dhangadi	31	0	31
Training on Electoral Logistics and Finance	27-28 August	Nepalgunj	30	0	30
Training on Electoral Logistics and Finance	27-28 August	Dang	28	3	31
Training on Electoral Logistics and Finance	29-30 August	Pokhara	31	1	32
Training on Electoral Logistics and Finance	29-30 August	Birgunj	30	2	32
Total of RToT (Logistics and Financial Management)			150	6	156
Total (MToT and RToT, Logistics and Financial Management)			174	8	182
MToT on Elections Operation and Management	6-7 September	Nagarkot	17	0	17

RToT on Elections Operation and Management for Returning Officers	10-11 September	Biratnagar	56	0	56
MToT on Elections Operation and Management for Returning Officers	13-14 September	Godavari	82	2	84
Total (MToT and RToT, Election Operations and Management)			155	2	157
MToT on Election Observation	26 September	Kathmandu	15	5	20
ToT on Election Observation to National Observers	29-30 September	Kathmandu	102	28	130
Total (MToT and ToT, Election Observation)			117	33	150
MToT on Polling and Counting	27-28 September	Godavari	25	5	30
TOTAL			815	118	933

Annex 2:

Voter Education Products Designed and/or Printed in Quarter 4, FY 13

VE Product	Product Description	For ECN	For IFES' CSOs
Leaflets	Message focused on - how to vote (general target audience)	2,000,000	100,000
	Targeting women, Freed Kamaiyas, Dalit, PWD and youth	-	815,000
Leaflet in Braille format	Motivating and informing voters with disability on provisions made for them on voting day	5,000	5,000
Posters	5 different types: Voting process, CA composition, marking ballots, motivational, etc.	5,000	-
	5 types on motivating women, youth, Dalits, Freed Kamaiyas and PWD on how to vote	-	133,700
Polling video	Video on the polling process to be used in training and voter education	1	1
Flipchart	Focusing on rights of PWD	-	400
	Focusing on the voting process	-	1,300
Youth PSA	Featuring popular youth artists and broadcast on two national FM stations	-	400 spots
Stickers	On motivating voters to vote	75,000	-
Flex Banners for Polling Locations	Informing voters of their polling location, date and time of voting	10,500	-